

March 2006

Volume 19 Number 03

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# Editorial



When I was a lad, March Break trips consisted of loading up suitcases, piling into my mother's Chrysler New Yorker and hitting the highway for Cooperstown and the Baseball Hall of Fame or –

worse yet – spending a full 24 hours driving to Florida. On our trip to Florida specifically, I passed the many hours fantasizing about all the firecrackers I'd buy, even drawing up price lists and sketching out schematic diagrams of how I'd load my newfound loot into a suitcase, hiding it from the prying eyes of Canada Customs officials on the return trip.

I didn't count on the fact that, as a child of about 12, I wasn't what you'd consider upwardly mobile, so a trip to the fireworks store was somewhat out of reach. Combine that with the fact that Mother Dearest held the purse strings and wasn't terribly excited at the thought of her youngest freeing himself of a digit or two in the normal male adolescent pursuit of "blowin' stuff up" and my pyrotechnic fantasies were quickly dashed.

Today, kids are perhaps more likely to be watching a DVD movie or even playing a console video game in the back

seat of their parents' SUV than they are to be staring out at the scenery or fantasizing about all the illicit fireworks they're going to smuggle across the border.

There are those that would argue that children are being robbed of their imaginations, spending the long hours from point A to a distant point B glued to the screen of an in-car DVD system, portable DVD player, portable videogame system or the myriad other options in portable diversions.

Also, while a good deal of my time as I recall it was spent in thought (or perhaps stasis is a more accurate description), I seem to be glossing over a few facts.

While my audio player was distinctly analogue, its headphones rarely left my ears. And while my Game Boy was of the original monochrome screened variety, it logged a great many hours on these trips too.

The tech I carried with me wasn't as advanced as that which kids have access to today, but the core concept remains the same. And I seem to have turned out alright. Arguably.

**Enjoy the Issue,**  
**Andrew Moore-Crispin**  
Editor-in-Chief

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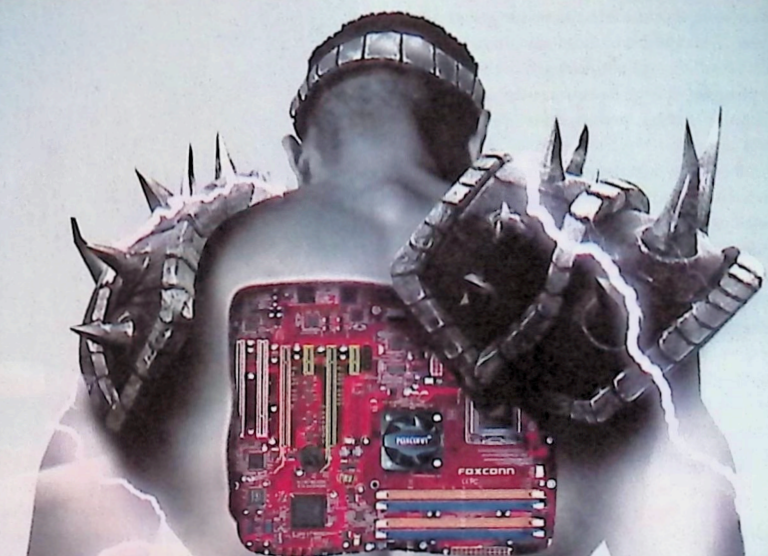
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# Monitoring Monitors

Well, I finally did it. I took the plunge into the world of LCD monitors after getting headaches from staring at my tiny 17-inch CRT monitor for many years. Yes, I actually bought a 19-inch LCD for myself. In fact, it is one of the monitors I've reviewed here and if you guess which one, I'll give you a \$5 gift certificate to Tim Hortons. LCD monitors have been getting pretty reasonable of late and the 19-inch ones aren't exacting the blood money they once did. In fact, it makes a lot of sense to consider this size as they command a minimal price premium over 17-inch versions. Given either size is almost always 1280 x 1024 (SXGA) resolution, you can run a 19-inch at its crisp native resolution without changing to large fonts or needing new glasses within minutes. Although, I hear Bubbles from the Trailer Park Boys may need a new stunt double.

Another thing to keep in mind is that SXGA native monitors have a slightly different aspect ratio than normal, being 5:4 as opposed to 4:3. This is actually better for print work or looking at long Web pages, but will stretch material running at other resolutions. For testing purposes, I calibrated each monitor using Colorvision's Spyder2PRO Studio to a gamma of 2.2 and a colour temperature of 6500K (D65). This is the expected target to which on-screen graphics and videos are made. The actual testing was done using the technician's version of Displaymate ([www.displaymate.com](http://www.displaymate.com)) and I also give the contrast ratio and brightness as measured by the Spyder2PRO's colorimeter after calibration. This varies quite a bit from the manufacturer's spec but this is quite normal. Also, I mention greyscale tracking which is the ability to show colours consistently at various levels.

## MultiSync LCD1970NX

Manufacturer: NEC <http://www.necdisplay.com>

Estimated price: \$560 Horizontal / vertical viewing angle: 176/176

Brightness: 250 cd/m<sup>2</sup> Latency: 18ms

Contrast ratio: 800:1

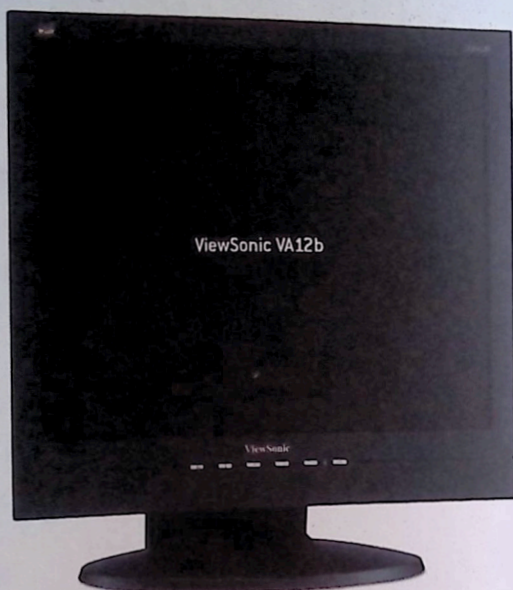
Features: DVI input, USB hub, tilt/height/rotate adjustable

**Pros:** Wide colour-correct viewing angle, printed manual, build quality and design

**Cons:** Higher latency, for the price every pixel should be perfect, connecting USB devices too fiddly

This is a solidly-built, business-class display with the utmost adjustability including a spring-assisted height adjustment. Yes, metal was actually used in its construction. Unfortunately, the cable management cover seems more of the crack, pop variety as opposed to snap, pop and I was loath to fiddle with it. The included full printed manual simply told me which direction I should break it. At least the manual is available when the display is not working as opposed to when you don't really need it. Also, the 4-port USB hub sits in the back left of the display. Next time put it on the front, please.

The buttons were clearly marked with a joystick for navigating the on-screen display (OSD) and you can download a utility to change settings using the computer itself. The viewing angle is measured using the more conservative CR>10 standard, which means it's even better than it sounds and it made a difference. Monitors of this size and resolution force the user to sit close enough to where there can be noticeable colour and brightness shifts near the edges of a display. This display showed the least propensity



to do this out of all reviewed, but at a cost to latency. If you're fussy about colour, this is a big deal. Greyscale tracking was very good after the much-needed calibration, with a small red cast around 48 RGB. The colorimeter showed a peak brightness of 153 cd/m<sup>2</sup> with a 250:1 contrast ratio after calibration with 193 cd/m<sup>2</sup> and 311:1 prior. If you buy this monitor, be sure to at least adjust the brightness downward from the default. The defective pixel policy allows for up to six defective pixels in total, four always on or off in total and no more than one in a 127 x 127 mm area before you can return it.

## VA912b

Manufacturer: Viewsonic <http://www.viewsonic.com>

Estimated price: \$370 Horizontal / vertical viewing angle: 160/160

Brightness: 250 cd/m<sup>2</sup> Latency: 8ms

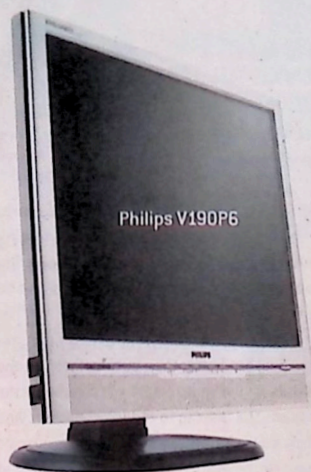
Contrast ratio: 500:1 Features: DVI input, speakers, tilt adjustable

**Pros:** Inexpensive DVI, bright, DVI cable included

**Cons:** Greyscale tracking, narrow viewing angle without colour shift

Viewsonic has offered up quite a reasonably priced unit with DVI and speakers to boot. Although, this may "sound" better than it actually is as the speakers are little more than tiny tinny things that go beep. Still, sometimes beeps and low level music are enough in the interest of increased desk space. All cables are included, notably a DVI one, and are neatly guided out the back using an infernal "crack, pop" covered cable management system. Controls on the front consist of six silver buttons which include mute, 1, down-arrow, up-arrow, 2 and power. The 1 is for the OSD menu and 2 doubles as a D-SUB/DVI toggle and menu select. In OSD, the 1 becomes deselect and 2 select. A bit confusing, but the OSD menu is pretty straightforward with preset colour temperatures that include an sRGB setting that disables user





brightness and contrast control. A pretty standard menu set otherwise, but the brightness control seems a bit uneven. Pre-calibration readings showed a bright 252 cd/m2 display with a 281:1 contrast ratio. After calibration this changed to 164 cd/m2 and 181:1. Although colour temperature is maintained fairly evenly through the greyscale, pretty severe correction curves were needed to get it there and quite a bit of colour banding is apparent in gradients. Blacks are a bit clipped as well. Viewsonic's defective pixel policy allows no more than seven defective pixels.

Brightness: 300 cd/m2 Latency: 8ms  
Contrast ratio: 500:1 Features: Widescreen, tilt adjustable

**Pros:** Widescreen gaming and computer video, decent default colour performance, price

**Cons:** A defective defective pixel policy, slim viewing angle without hue shift, button labels impossible to read

This is the odd one in the bunch being widescreen (16:10) with no DVI input but at a very reasonable price. Its native resolution is 1440 x 900, which makes it an option for watching high-definition WMVs when the mood strikes. It's not a bad looking unit but the plastic stand offers limited control over positioning and allows no downward tilt. The cable inputs are quite far to each side of the stand allowing little chance to hide cabling. Under the bottom bezel there are five silver buttons labelled auto, <, >, menu and power. Pretty standard but menu system uses the "guess what I am" system of hieroglyphics and controls are slow to respond along incremental values. The RGB controls vary the white point little for the "user" defined colour temperature setting with the other options being "warm" or "cool." After calibration, it measured in at 181 cd/m2 with a 246:1 contrast ratio and 209 cd/m2 and 283:1 beforehand. Greyscale tracking was good with little variation in hue but this is tempered with a light leak along the top bezel and minor uniformity issues. The warm setting sits very close to 6500K and little adjustment is required from default. During game play testing, blacks seemed somewhat compressed, hiding shadow detail. Acer's defective pixel policy allows up to 15 anywhere on the screen and no more than one in the

#### AL1916W

Manufacturer: Acer <http://www.acer.com>

Estimated price: \$360 Horizontal / vertical viewing angle: 150/130



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Acer AL1916W

centre third vertically and horizontally for this display. This is calculated using their formula of four per million [sub]pixels. The review unit had no defective pixels.

**V190P6**

Manufacturer: Philips <http://www.philips.ca>

Estimated price: \$600

Horizontal / vertical viewing angle: 160/160

Brightness: 250 cd/m<sup>2</sup>

Latency: 8ms Contrast ratio: 600:1

Features: DVI input, USB hub, speakers, tilt/height/rotate/pivot adjustable

**Pros:** Best picture here, no pixel defects allowed, nicely built

**Cons:** Affordability, slim viewing angle without hue shift

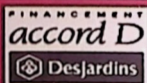
Another solidly built business unit that brings everything to the office party except the lampshades. Again, the built-in speakers are nothing to sing about but a full kit of DVI, USB, audio and D-SUB cables are all included. The manual comes supplied solely on disc and it certainly is extensive but I'd still prefer the tree killer variety. Controls are laid out in a sensible manner and clearly marked, and the same goes for the OSD. Its four USB ports are placed on the left edge which isn't ideal but better than putting them on the back. It also has an interesting feature called Smartbright, which detects the surrounding ambient light and adjusts the display to reduce eyestrain. And what a display it is, winning hands down for an extremely even greyscale with one noticeable band compared to the average display here showing at least 20. Before and after calibration, greys were rock solid with a consistent colour hue throughout the spectrum. Pre-calibration measurements showed 238 cd/m<sup>2</sup> brightness with a contrast ratio of 323:1. After calibration this changed to 192 cd/m<sup>2</sup> with a 275:1 contrast ratio and a white point of 6550K. The only issue was a light leak at the top of the display with a smaller one at the bottom. Defective pixel policy is zero tolerance with no defects allowed for one year.

By Andrew Carruthers



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# Colour effects for your photos

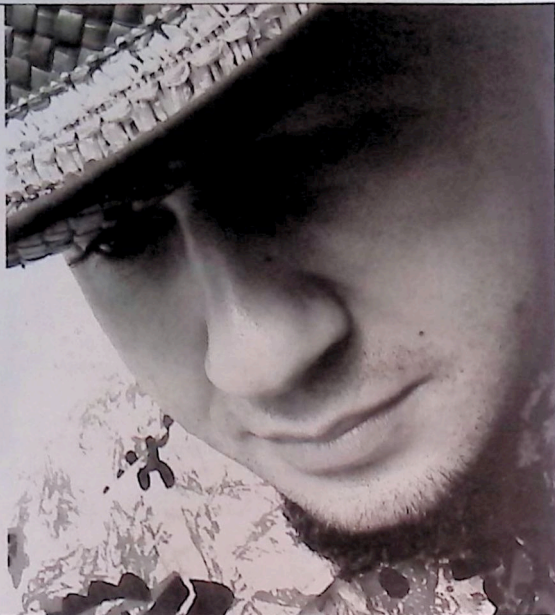
At one time in photography colour was a novelty, but it's now monochrome and hand-tinted photos that are novelties. With digital, it is easy to recreate those classic looks, in order to give your photos an unusual spin.


Some cameras have a "black & white" mode, which strips out the colour information as part of the digitizing process. The problem with this is that you are stuck with a monochrome original. A method that offers more flexibility is to strip out the colour information in an image editor – that way you still have a colour original.

There are a few different ways to convert an image to black and white. If you access the Mode menu, you will see a number of options including RGB and greyscale. The image from your camera will be RGB, but if you select greyscale, all the colour values will be converted to shades of grey, producing a black and white image.

Another way of making colour images into greyscale ones is to turn the saturation slider down to zero (this is on the Color Correction tool in Photoshop). This image is still an RGB image, but with saturation at zero, the colours have essentially been turned off. Turning it partway off gives the effect of a faded colour photo.

A third method, which is more complicated but allows you to produce more interesting effects is to use the Channel Mixer tool. The Channel Mixer allows you to blend the strength of each of the red, green and blue colour channels in an RGB image. In Photoshop there is a monochrome setting you can turn on, and when you do so, the resulting greyscale image






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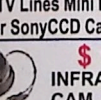
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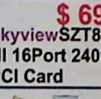
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you create is influenced by the relative strength you give to three colour channels. This sounds complicated, but if you play with this tool you will immediately see what effect dialling up the red channel or dialling back the blue channel has. This is the tool to use to create dramatic and rich black and white photos in the style of Ansel Adams, for example.

To simulate the look of hand-tinted black and white photos, the simplest method is to duplicate the image on a new layer and convert it to greyscale. You can then use the eraser tool with a very soft setting to selectively remove parts of the greyscale layer, which allows the colour of the base layer to show through. For example, if you had a photo of an infant, you could just work on the cheeks, eyes and hair, so that the image would look black and white, but with a touch of blush on the cheeks and a hint of colour in the hair and eyes.

You can also use this to create more dramatic effects – the kind that you might see in a magazine ad where the image is monochrome except for one element like a rose petal or strawberry, which is in full colour. Rather than using a soft-edged tool you would use a harder edge to precisely cut the monochrome object out, revealing the full colour version on the base layer.

By David Tanaka



## Photoshop CS2 Killer Tips

By Scott Kelby and Felix Nelson

Published by New Riders, 2006

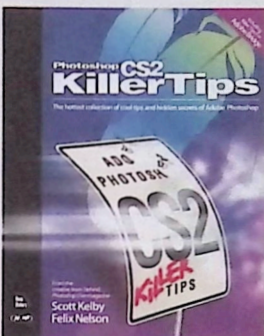
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If these kinds of questions pop up routinely while you work in Photoshop



CS2, Killer Tips may prove its worth. It's not a basic how-to volume. It assumes that you have at least an intermediate knowledge of Photoshop and are using the latest version, CS2. In all there are more than 200 tips organized into six chapters. This organization is useful, but I found myself also thumbing through it randomly to discover all the neat tips I never even realized would be good to know.

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# Moving to Mac: iLike iLife '06

There was a lot of talk about Apple's move to the Intel processor during this year's Macworld keynote, but it wasn't all about the hardware. In addition to a pair of new Intel-based Macs, Apple also released new versions of its two main consumer bundles, iLife and iWork.

When a company comes out with a new version of a popular piece of software, often it's just the same old thing with a few surface-level updates – new templates, new skins or perhaps a few minor behind-the-scenes code

tweaks. That's largely the case with the new version of iWork, which features tighter integration with other applications in the iWork and iTunes stable, as well as the ability to render charts in three-dimensional woodgrain.

iLife '06, on the other hand, features a far more substantial update. While all of the applications inside iLife were updated, the key update is a new application, iWeb, which allows users to quickly and easily design their own Web pages using content they already have in iPhoto, iMovie and iTunes.

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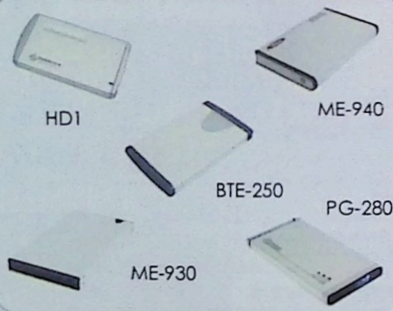
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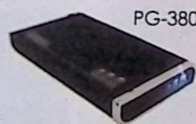
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









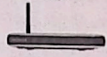









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### The new multimedia world

One of the promises of Web 2.0 is that it will turn all of us into content producers; all you have to do is take a look at the explosion of podcasting (both audio and video) and the popularity of photo-sharing sites like Flickr to see the shift from a world where Web users consume content to a world where they create it.

iLife is one of the first consumer applications to really understand this shift: when you're creating your own Web pages, iWeb gives you ready-to-use templates for the creation of your own photo galleries, movie playback pages and your very own blog. Better still, GarageBand now comes with a component called Podcast Studio, which allows you to assemble your podcast – including audio tracks, graphics and even video – using the same timeline-based

interface used to create regular GarageBand audio tracks.

Let's take a look at the individual components.

### GarageBand 3

The majority of the updates to GarageBand revolve around the application's new ability to create podcasts. Now, when you fire up the application, there's a splash screen that asks you whether you want to create a music project, a podcast episode, or a new movie score.

If you choose the podcasting option, the new document looks very similar to a traditional multi-track GarageBand document, but there's also a "podcast" track at the top of the stack, tracks for male and female voice, a jingle track, and a radio sounds track.

The podcast track at the top is actually a visual track, allowing you to plug in graphics at various points of the podcast to accompany the subject material. Many audio podcasts come with an "artwork" track, with graphics that change during the podcast to emphasize key points. In GarageBand, you simply need to drag your graphics onto the timeline at the appropriate point, in exactly the same way that you'd add a sound effect or a loop.

If it sounds basic, it is – but there are a few subtle things that are really nice. First, you not only have access to a library of new "jingle" tracks, but you can drag and drop audio and video tracks from the libraries you've already amassed on your computer. (Of course, there's a warning whenever you try to publish, reminding you that you shouldn't publish copyrighted material.) The program is also smart enough to know that when the vocal track comes in, the music track should be "ducked" down to a lower level automatically.

When you're done recording and assembling your podcast track, you can send it to iTunes to preview it, or you can send it directly to iWeb for publishing to your Web site.

### iPhoto 6

After you install the new version of iLife, you'll be asked to reconfigure your iPhoto library for the new version of the application. When you do, however, you're able to store up to 250,000 photos in iPhoto – up from the previous high water mark of 25,000 – and you're able to make your photographs available to your friends and family via a new feature known as "photocasting."

Photocasting is pretty much what you'd guess it is, if you're already familiar with the world of podcasting: it's taking your photo library and making select parts available for download to people who subscribe to your photo stream. All you have to do to share your photos is click on an album, then choose "photocast" from the Share menu. Then your family, friends and contacts can subscribe to your photos, and they'll automatically appear as an entry in their own iPhoto library, at the quality level you pre-set.

### iWeb

iWeb is where all of your media comes together. If all you're interested in is designing a Web page to say, "Hi, this is my page!" you can do that easily enough using iWeb, but the application's real power is in the way it draws content from the other applications in the iLife suite: photos can easily be pulled from iPhoto and turned into photo galleries; you can create a podcast in GarageBand and publish it via iWeb; you can even create your own blog and manage all of the entries

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—incorporating media content found in your photo, video and podcast library— using the iWeb application.

The big upside of iWeb is that it makes it incredibly easy for users to design their own Web pages simply by taking a pre-designed template and then replacing or altering it to suit individual needs or personalities. There are a number of pre-configured templates that are ready to use. The good news is that you can certainly slide items around and custom-configure them; the bad news is that they will always still have a certain "stock" look that will scream out "iWeb" as pages start to proliferate.

### The catch

While all of the new features of iLife '06 sound fantastic, there's one catch: for the best user experience, you'll really want to subscribe to Apple's .Mac service, which costs \$139 per year. That not only gets you a Web space with up to one gigabyte of storage for your Web pages, but online storage for your documents, and a dedicated .mac email address.

Of course, you don't absolutely need to sign up for the .Mac service to create your own Web pages — you can save them all to a folder on your computer and manually upload them to your own Web server — but a .Mac account running in the background definitely makes most of the features in iLife '06 a lot easier to use, as it manages all of the subtleties of the process, including automatic management of RSS feeds for people who want to subscribe to your content.

By Sean Carruthers

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# Book challenges the House That Gates Built

## Just Say No To Microsoft

By Tony Nove

No Starch Press, 2005 ISBN 1-59327-064-X

Paperback, 256 pages Price: \$33.95

In the forward to Tony Nove's book *Just Say No To Microsoft*, journalist John C. Dvorak acknowledges Microsoft's enormous influence on the computing landscape, but says that it's now a stereotypical Big Corporation, a proverbial dead shark floating in the water, crippled by corporate lethargy. He likens Microsoft to The Simpsons character Montgomery Burns: "Filthy rich and nasty but with no punching power."

These are bold words, but then Nove has chosen to tackle a pretty bold subject given the extent to which Microsoft's presence dominates the computing landscape.

It may seem inconceivable to some people that alternatives to near-ubiquitous applications like Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Internet Explorer and Windows exist, but *Just Say No To Microsoft* will introduce you to some of the best, and the book encourages readers to experiment with various open source and non-Microsoft products.

"You need to get out from under the trees to see the forest," Nove suggests. He likens the Microsoft monopoly to excessive in-breeding, with "Microsoft code spawning more Microsoft code," and he stresses the need to introduce new genes (i.e. software) into the gene pool to maintain the overall health of the software industry.

Nove says he doesn't hold a grudge against Microsoft, and acknowledges that the unification of system software into one standard (DOS) definitely had its benefits. Nor does he say that there's anything inherently ethically wrong with a monopoly. However, he believes that when a company does achieve a monopoly, as Microsoft has done, it should be subject to a new set of rules to ensure that this doesn't cause more problems for consumers than it solves. This hasn't been the case with Microsoft, Nove argues.

*Just Say No To Microsoft* serves two purposes. It's a historical eye-opener by providing a detailed and seemingly well-researched account of Microsoft's business practices from the early 80s through to the late 90s, a period characterized by a series of aggressive and often petty (if not downright shady) business moves on the part of Microsoft — such as establishing its MS-DOS operating system as the only OS for IBM PCs, and squeezing out Netscape Navigator in the Internet browser wars — that eventually culminated with Microsoft dominating areas including computer systems, applications, pocket devices, home entertainment systems, networks and the Internet.

The book also contains a fair amount of practical how-to information and tips for those who either want to try out some of the alternatives suggested, or simply learn to get a better experience out of the Microsoft products they've decided to stick with, such as setting up Windows Media Player so that it is no longer the default player for all media on the computer.

The author endorses Mac OS X and Linux as alternatives to Windows (albeit

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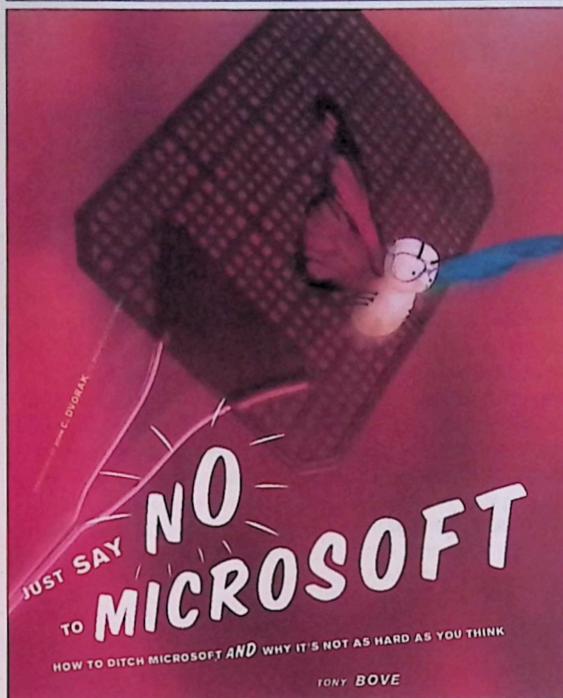


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with trade-offs – one is more expensive and another less user-friendly), discusses Firefox as an alternative browser without the same security vulnerabilities as Internet Explorer, and sings the praises of OpenOffice.org and other free open-source word processing tools as alternatives to the all-mighty Microsoft Word, which many people feel is “the first, last, and final reason why you can’t escape Microsoft software.”

The final chapter is a somewhat tongue-in-cheek take-off on the 12-step program from Alcoholics Anonymous tweaked to help you wean yourself off Microsoft products.

Just Say No To Microsoft is a good introductory resource for bringing various software alternatives out of the underground and making them accessible to the average office worker or home user. It doesn’t go easy on the software giant, but Nove’s tone rises above that of the petulant, mud-slinging axe-grinder. If nothing else, the book will provoke discussion and shake up entrenched ways of thinking that have no doubt contributed to the monopoly Microsoft has enjoyed for more than a decade and continues to enjoy today. It’s worth a read.

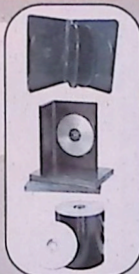
By Erin Bell

For back issues of HUB: Digital Living visit our Web site at [www.hubcanada.com](http://www.hubcanada.com). There, you will find recent issues archived by date including the most recent issue, which is uploaded the same day HUB: Digital Living magazine hits distribution locations across Canada.

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## "Home" entertainment for the car

### The hottest in home tech – on four wheels

You can take it with you – your favourite home theatre gear, that is.

OK, so we're not recommending to squeeze your 55-inch plasma into the minivan for a family road trip during March Break, but there are many products designed to replicate the home theatre experience in the car.

From watching your favourite DVDs to playing console games to enjoying 5.1 surround sound music, the following ideas should help reduce – if not eliminate – the dreaded "are we there yet" question from the backseat.

### Watch yer flicks on Route 66

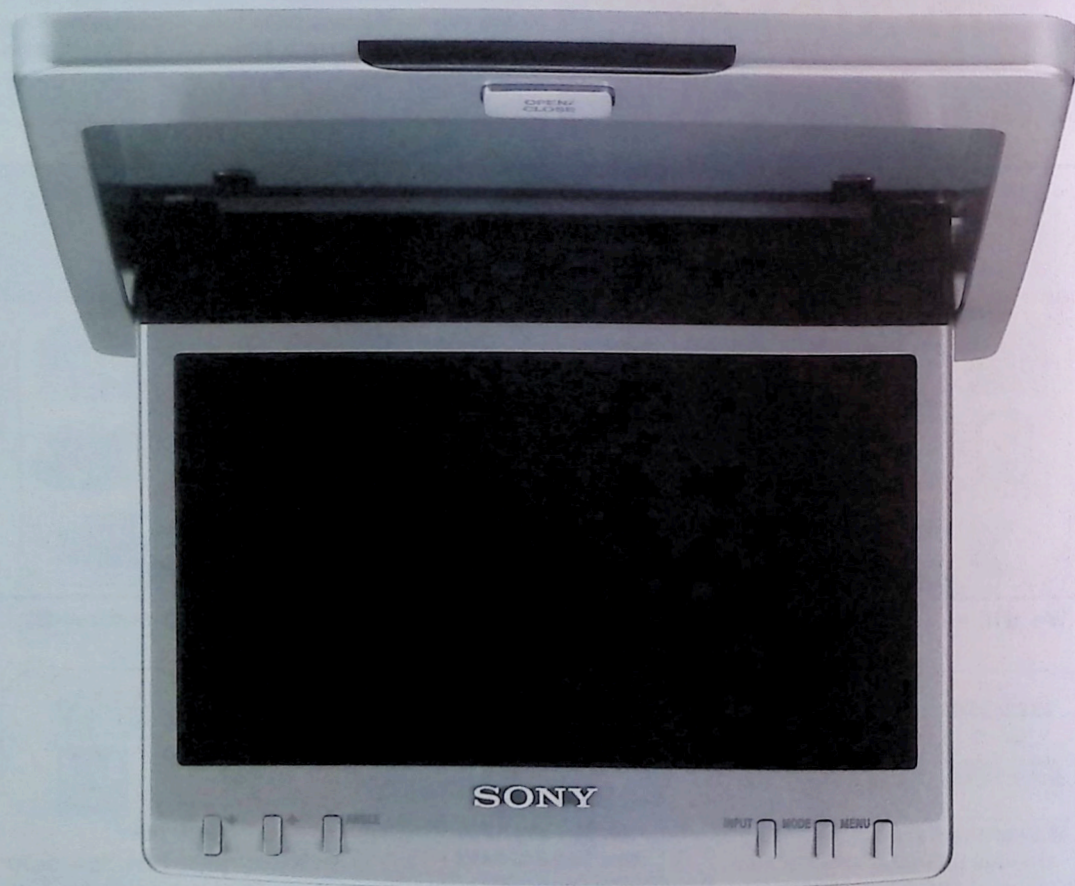
Movie lovers have a number of options to enjoy their favourite DVDs on the road. Prices for portable DVD players are dropping all the time as new features are continuously added, such as bigger widescreen displays, MP3 playback and dual headphone jacks (so the kids need not fight over who wears the earphones). In fact, you can find a portable DVD player with a 7-inch screen for as low as \$79. Our pick is the 1.5-pound Sony DVP-FX705 (\$299) for its super-bright 16:9 LCD screen, long battery life, multiple audio and

video outputs, MP3/JPEG support and bundled remote, car battery charger and AC adaptor.

Some portable DVD players, such as the Audiovox D1708PK (\$199), ship with a case that straps onto the back of the driver or passenger seat, therefore you can open the clam-shell player all the way and slide it into the case for hands-free backseat viewing.

Many minivan owners who bought their vehicle without a built-in DVD player are considering aftermarket solutions. While they cost more than a portable DVD player (and you can't take it out of the car) these are often preferred as they use your car stereo's speaker system and are conveniently mounted to the vehicle's ceiling. For the price, we like the Audiovox Movies2Go 10.2-inch wide monitor (\$799), a combo DVD player and pull-down LCD screen with anti-shock technology, dome lights and wireless remote. An 8.5-inch overhead model from Audiovox sells for \$599.

Laptops, which are perfect for viewing DVDs in the backseat, are also becoming much more affordable. Dell, for example, has laptops as cheap as \$649 – and they do a lot more than just a portable DVD player, of course.





Be sure to pick a laptop with decent battery life, such as the Intel Centrino-branded PCs, or invest in a car adaptor for your notebook.

## Dude's where's my car (audio)?

Music lovers have never had so many choices for in-car audio, from traditional AM/FM stations to Sirius and XM satellite radio options to newer car stereos that can read MP3s on DVD-Rs so you can fit a whopping 1300 songs on one single blank disc (perfect for those really long drives!).

Some cars, such as the Acura TL (\$43,430 and up), even offer 5.1 surround sound – yes, in your car. These built-in Panasonic stereo systems can read DVD-Audio discs, which deliver true six channel audio via left and right front speakers, left and right rear speakers, a center channel and a subwoofer for the rumbling bass. I recently had a chance to test-drive one of these vehicles and I can tell you Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody in 5.1 is simply amazing.

You can also watch movies in surround sound from your laptop. Here's what you need: Creative's Audigy 2 ZS Notebook card (\$129) gives your computer true surround sound (up to 7.1 channels). And to take advantage of this audio with headphones, you'll need a product like the \$69 Zalman 5.1 Channel Headphones.

And lest we forget about the almighty iPod and other portable digital audio players: If you upgrade those sub-par ear buds with a decent set of cushy headphones, you'll be able to close your eyes in the backseat or passenger seat and recreate the home theatre experience for your ears.

## Game on!

The Nintendo Game Boy has been a saviour for parents with kids on a

road trip. More recently, it's the the Nintendo DS and PlayStation Portable (PSP), and for educational portable game systems there's Leapfrog's Leapster and L-Max.

But did you know you can play your beloved PlayStation 2 on the road? That's right, you can play the likes of Resident Evil 4, God of War or NHL 06 from the comfort of your backseat, as if you were home reclining on your La-Z-Boy with your feet up on the coffee table.

Owners of the smaller and slimmer PlayStation 2 (unofficially dubbed PSTwo) who want to bring their gaming console in the car, can invest in the Joytech PS2 8-inch LCD Monitor (\$199). This screen screws directly onto the back of the hardcover book-shaped machine, so now you've got a portable gaming system with built-in stereo SRS surround sound speakers (and two headphone ports). And don't forget your PS2 can double as a CD/DVD player. Car adaptor cables are also included.

A bulkier Xbox version is also available from Joytech, though, oddly enough, the in-car power adaptors – one for the Xbox, one for the monitor – are sold separately.

By Marc Saltzman

Questions and comments relating to the home entertainment section, including Marc Saltzman's monthly column, can be sent to [homeentertainment@publishing.ca](mailto:homeentertainment@publishing.ca).



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## How to better market your business with Publisher design sets and templates.

All businesses and business people need a minimum of printed materials, generally starting with a letterhead and business cards. The range might also include brochures, advertisements and newsletters. These business documents carry a message about your business, who you are and what you do. They also help to build brand loyalty so a customer will see your logo and business name and immediately recognize it as being you. To help this recognition process, it is important that your business documents all look like they belong to the same business and that they share similar features. This is where Publisher shines as a tool for businesses. Whether you're a one-person business or you have many employees, its features help you create an instant and cohesive "look" for your business.

## Design sets

Design sets are a series of typical business documents with a similar look. There are plenty to choose from, and, to ensure your business has a recognizable identity, you should choose one design and stick to it for all your business documents. Find the design sets by launching Publisher and choose Design Sets from the task pane. The Blends set is very popular, and others that look good include Studio, Quadrant, Marquee and PhotoScope. When choosing one to use, focus less on the colours, as these can be changed, and look for one with the shapes and general layout that appeals to you. Whichever one you decide to use, stick with it for all your publications so you develop a consistent look.

Click a document, such as the business card, in the design that you plan to use. This opens it for editing. The Personal information sets let



you enter your business details once and use them for all objects you create. Choose Edit, Personal Information and select one of the four sets: Primary Business, Secondary Business, Other Organization, Home/Family. Enter your details and click Update to update the elements in the business card with these details. You can also specify a colour scheme for that particular set by selecting the "Include color scheme in this set" checkbox and select a scheme to use. If the colour schemes aren't to your taste, click the Color Schemes link in the task pane and click the Custom Color Scheme link to create a new one. When you create and use a colour scheme, those colours are listed whenever you select a colour from a toolbar button – this ensures that you always use the same colour and that they go together well.

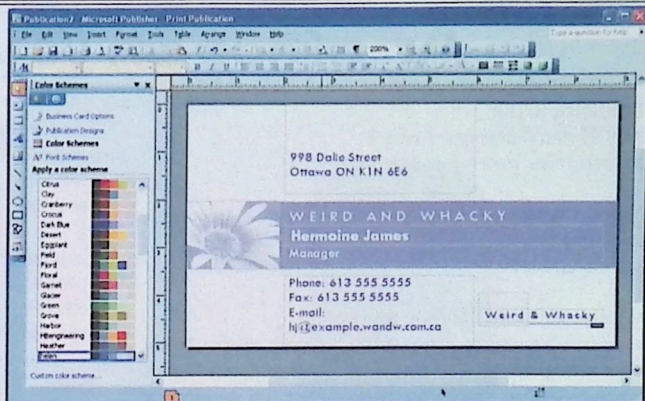
If you have a company logo, replace the image on the business card with it. If you don't have a logo, click the Logo wizard and choose a logo from the listed options. Click on the text to replace the text with your own company name and replace the image by selecting it, right-clicking, choosing Change Picture, and selecting an image from the clip gallery.

When you save your publication, you'll be asked if you want to add your altered logo to your personal information set. Answer Yes and the logo will be included in future documents when you create them and choose to use this particular set of personal information.

Once you have created and printed one document and set up all the personal information details and logo, you will find it quicker to set up other documents as much of the work will have already been done.

For publications like brochures, business cards and newsletters, where you will create different versions over time (business cards for multiple employees, different brochures for different products and monthly newsletters) save these as templates to use over again. Remove any of the one-off information from the document, leaving just the information which goes in every document of this type. Then save your document by choosing File, Save as. From the "Save as type" dropdown list choose Publisher Template (\*.pub) and give the template a name. Close and reopen Publisher and your new template will appear in the Templates, My Templates area when you next select to create a new publication.

If you're printing Publisher documents using your own printer, there's little else you need to do. You're now ready to add text and images to your publication and to print your own marketing materials. If you're sending your documents to a commercial printing service, check with your printer to see if they have any special requirements for your files.



You can save hours of extra work by ensuring you meet your printer's requirements before you start. In if doubt, send a test file to your printer to make sure it's in a format they can use.

By Helen Bradley



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**Pros:** Instant email delivery, fast Web browsing, native support for many email attachments

**Cons:** No memory expansion, poor holster design, no camera

As PDAs go, the BlackBerry 8700r is all business.

It doesn't include a camera as other players in the space often do. There's no loop for attaching the various wrist straps and flashing cell phone charms that seem to be catching on in North America of late, and the handheld doesn't offer any memory expansion options for movies or music.

However, for some business users, these aren't so much strikes against as they are an affirmation that BlackBerry is sticking to what it does best: incorporating a business users' communication and productivity needs into one slick and reliable device.

Add to that a growing library of downloadable software – either direct download to the device or installed to the handheld when it's connected and synced with a PC – and the possibilities are expanded further.

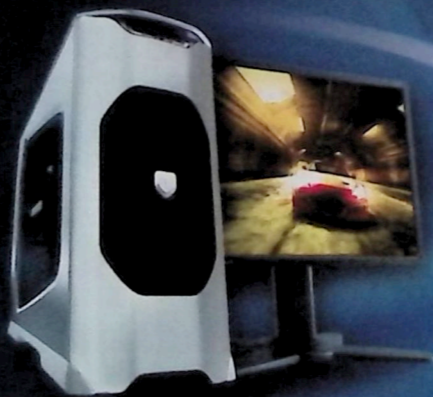
Once the initial set-up is looked after and email starts getting pushed to the device, it's near impossible to put the thing down, whether waiting for public transit, sitting in an airport terminal or (shamefully) sitting down to dinner.



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The same push email delivery method that makes BlackBerry devices an excellent choice for enterprise, government and mobile professionals is currently under dispute in the US and elsewhere. Certain companies are making claims on patents they hold that are allegedly infringed upon by RIM's push email system. RIM is working on creating an alternate delivery method that it says can be rolled out immediately if they aren't successful in defending the validity of their own patents.

The device's biggest strength is the seamless integration of telephone, email, SMS, instant messaging and Web applications. Phone numbers, email and Web addresses are automatically recognized by the 8700r, and calling a number or sending a message to an email address is as simple as scrolling and clicking. Likewise, common email attachments such as document files (.rtf, .doc, .txt), spreadsheet formats, Adobe's PDF format and common image formats were downloaded and displayed on the device without issue. In the case of large files, multi-page spreadsheets and longer documents, users are presented with an option to download the entire contents, one page of a larger spreadsheet book or the first part of a document to save on data charges or can choose to grab the file in full.

The 8700r is very responsive and launches native applications instantly. Some add-on apps require a little time to launch but are generally pretty fast to pop up thanks to the device's Intel PXA901 312-MHz processor.

In our tests, the device has proven very durable, taking several dives from waist-level to the surface of several roads, one sidewalk and a couple of subway platforms. On a related note, the holster that is included in the package could use some work and the 8700r has a tendency to liberate itself from the confines of its belt-hung cradle whenever its owner feels it necessary to run. At the time of writing, no other holster options are available, according to the accessories section of the BlackBerry site.

The 8700r, as with other BlackBerry devices, can be mobilized as part of a fleet which is directly push synched with a company server for appointments, messages, emails and Web applications. As a single deployment device, however, users must set up email delivery options, which is a simple affair. Email can be filtered such that only messages from colleagues are sent to the device for example, cutting down on

data charges.

The only notable downsides are the lack of a camera or memory expansion and the ill designed holster that ships with the device.

By Andrew Moore-Crispin



## Google Local

At this year's Consumer Electronics Show (CES), Google's Larry Page used his keynote speech to announce several new additions to the Google family of online offerings. Among the new developments was a version of the company's excellent Google Maps service (maps.google.com). Designed for mobile phones, the service is called Google Local and debuted on the BlackBerry 8700. Since then, it has been made available to other handsets. The only requirements are a data plan and Java capability.

On the 8700r as tested, the service is fast thanks to the powerful handheld and the fact that it's on Rogers' EDGE network. It gives access to many of the functions as the original Google Maps service, including turn-by-turn directions, area searches (i.e. Sushi around 775 The Queensway) and even satellite imagery.

It doesn't take the place of a handheld GPS, and it hasn't been subject to the many excellent mashups that the online map service has, but it's an excellent means of finding your way in a pinch.

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## Satellite radio

Satellite radio is often promoted on the premise that you can pick up a signal virtually anywhere. That makes many of us think of the advantages of receiving clear, uninterrupted radio on highways, during camping trips, and on boats. Oddly enough, we often overlook the most obvious place we might want to listen to radio: at home.

Why would you want to listen to satellite radio at home? Crystal clear reception aside, probably for the same reasons you might listen to Internet radio: fewer commercials, more control over content, and immediate access to artist and track information. And – college kids entering spring break listen up – satellite radio can be an ideal solution for parties, delivering genre-specific music that sounds as though it could be an extension of your own collection (no one has to know otherwise).

Several satellite tuners geared for home use have popped up over the last

year, and more will be released throughout 2006 – including a stylish unit designed by Porsche for renowned radio manufacturer Eton Corp. slated for spring release. In the meantime, here are three home satellite radio tuners that are currently available in Canada.

### Tivoli Model Satellite Table Radio

[www.tivoliaudio.com](http://www.tivoliaudio.com)

The table radio is Tivoli's bread and butter, and its new Model Satellite table radio, the company's first satellite radio tuner, delivers the same quality that its traditional radios have come to be known for.

With a design based on the company's award-winning Tivoli Model One radio engineered by Audio Hall of Fame member Henry Kloss, the Model Satellite is in many ways a throwback to the glory days of radio with its

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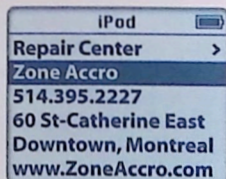
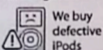
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## Tivoli Model Satellite Table Radio



wooden cabinet, single speaker, and large tuning dial.

But its adjustable, cool blue LCD screen hints at the modern technology within, which, in addition to doing an exceptional job of delivering clear reception of standard FM and AM radio signals, is also geared to tune into the Sirius satellite network. Consumers looking for more than just a table radio can expand the Model Satellite into a complete, chic home audio system by connecting additional components, such as the Tivoli Model CD player and subwoofer.

Priced at around \$300, the Model Satellite may seem a tad expensive for a table radio (especially once you factor in the monthly Sirius subscription fee), but this is a true case of getting what you pay for; Tivoli engineering is hard to beat.

### Delphi XM SKYFi 2 with Home Adapter Kit [www.delphi.com](http://www.delphi.com)

Delphi is the leading manufacturer of XM Satellite Radio receivers for several reasons, and one of those reasons is the respect the company has shown consumers.

For example, rather than forcing people to buy multiple tuners to be used in various locations, Delphi offers the SKYFi 2, a small, multipurpose tuner that can be transported and used just about anywhere – assuming you have the proper adaptor.

For use with your home stereo, the \$200 tuner requires the Delphi SKYFi 2 Home Adaptor Kit, which costs about \$50. The kit includes a small black stand, a hi-gain indoor antenna, and RCA and speaker jacks.

Once set up, the SKYFi 2 provides all of the functionality one would expect in an XM receiver, including more than two dozen station presets, personalized information tickers, and a preview mode that shows information from other stations prior to changing channels. Its large LCD panel displays up to five lines of text and offers customization options for its look and feel.

components, the matte black finished XRt12 will fit right in with most existing home stereo systems.

It comes with a full function remote to allow users to surf satellite signals from the comfort of the couch. To further facilitate remote listening, the XRt12 can be connected to your television set to display station and track

The SKYFi 2's bland silver and black design may keep it from being the prettiest tuner on the market, but technology pragmatists will be hard pressed to find a more practical satellite radio solution.

### Polk Audio XRt12 Tuner [www.polkaudio.com](http://www.polkaudio.com)

Serious audiophiles probably aren't interested in table radios or non-standardized receivers that clash with their existing stereo systems. That's where Polk Audio's XRt12 tuner comes in. It's the first official component tuner for XM radio and the performance reference standard for all XM tuners.

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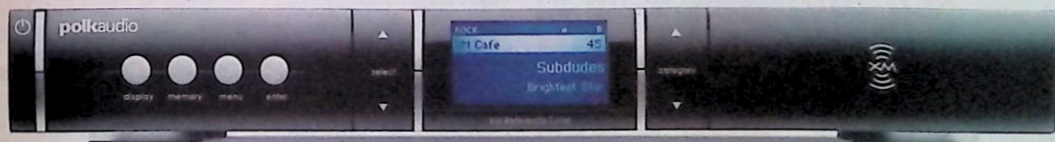
Delphi XM SKYFi2

information. Additional features include memory functionality to record station, artist, and track information whenever you hear a song you like, built-in home networking functionality to distribute the XM signal throughout your home, and a signal strength meter that helps users find an optimal location for their antenna.

The XRt12 is available for just under \$300 on the Polk Audio Web site.

By Chad Sapieha

### Polk Audio XRt12 Tuner





# Alienware launches PC game store

Alienware, a company best known for its high-end gaming PCs and laptops, has launched an online store that allows customers to purchase and install PC games and strategy guides directly to their computers.

The Alienware Digital Download Store (<http://downloads.aliware.com>) offers Action, RPG, Strategy and MMO titles from top videogame publishers including Electronic Arts, Ubisoft, Activision, Atari, Sony Online Entertainment and Vivendi Universal. Prices of the games vary, from US\$29.95 for Serious Sam 2 and City of Heroes to US\$49.95 for newer releases like Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones and Civilization 4.

The store also offers digital downloads of Prima strategy guides, which range in price from US\$5.99 to US\$12.99.

Gift certificates for the store can be purchased from the Web site in various denominations.

Users must register for an account and can then download purchased games via Secure Digital Download in as little as 30 minutes depending on file size and Internet connection, according to Alienware.

Each game incorporates digital rights management (DRM) software to control piracy by limiting the number of times a game can be installed and transferred to other machines. The exact numbers vary depending on publisher and game title. "If someone needs to install another copy and their activations have run out, our customers service team is ready to help them," explained Frances Alvarez, Alienware's director of licensing, who also went on to say that users can back up their downloaded game to CD

as many times as they like. Purchased games can be downloaded again for free in the event of a hard drive crash.

The download also includes all documents supplied by the publisher in digital format, including instruction manuals.

One downside to the service is that the downloaded games are not compatible with CD-ROM versions of expansion packs. According to the Web site, to be compatible with the main game, an expansion pack must also be purchased through the online store.

By Erin Bell



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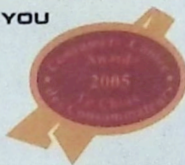
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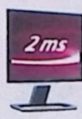
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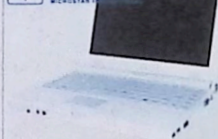
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# The causes and cures of motion sickness

What do *Morrowind*, *Gran Turismo*, *Tomb Raider*, *Half-Life* and *Katamari Damacy* have in common? They make people ill.

Dizziness, nausea, and what some people might describe as a headache – it's absolutely wretched, and it can sometimes linger for hours or even all day. Welcome to the thoroughly unpleasant condition known as motion sickness, which afflicts up to half of people who travel on planes, boats, busses and rollercoasters, but can also rear its ugly head in the comfort of the living room. The culprit: videogames.

## What causes motion sickness?

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, people perceive motion through various sensors in the body. Liquid in the inner-ear helps gauge depth and height, the eyes and neck keep us oriented when we turn our head, and nerves in the ankles, knees and other joints register information about the surface we're walking on.

Motion sickness occurs when these sensors get scrambled and send conflicting signals to the brain. For example, when we look out the window of a vehicle, our eyes see movement but our muscles aren't registering any movement. Two different signals get sent to the brain, resulting in the disorienting effects of motion sickness. The same effect can be caused by watching movement on a large screen.

Ironically, motion sickness in videogames didn't start to become a problem until the games themselves got more sophisticated. As technology advanced, games started incorporating realistic three-dimensional graphics that gave players a first-person view of the game's environment, and the impression he or she was "inside" the game, complete with head-bobbing effects and the disorienting ability to look up and down.

For some gamers, the evolution of videogames from 2D to 3D spelled disaster.

"First-person shooters are impossible for me to play," says Sigmund Shen, a 35-year-old graduate student from New York. "3D games like *Tomb Raider* are almost as bad. The sliding rally races in *Gran Turismo 3* made me miserable."

When the first 3D hit, *Wolfenstein 3D*, stormed onto the video game scene in the early 1990's, hundreds of thousands of gamers played it obsessively. However, a significant number of players complained of motion sickness as well. According to author David Kushner, who documented the events in his book *Masters of Doom*, one of *Wolfenstein's* developers was so badly affected by its graphics that he would have to take frequent breaks from programming to go lie on the couch.

Driving games with extreme speeds can also induce the condition – in 2004 British developer Digital Jesters was the first to slap a motion sickness

warning on its PC title *Trackmania: Sunrise*, after a large number of game testers reportedly succumbed to spells of motion sickness. But motion sickness-inducing segments can pop up in even the most harmless-seeming of games, such as the *Smellovision* mode in *Hip Games'* light-hearted canine simulation *A Dog's Life*.

Having to abandon certain games because it's physically impossible to continue is a hard thing for serious gamers to accept. Renowned professional gamer Kornelia is one of the top *Quake 4* players in the world despite suffering the occasional bout of motion sickness. She's able to play through it, but others aren't so tough.

As a motion sickness sufferer myself, I started avoiding first-person shooters completely after some unpleasant run-ins with *Wolfenstein 3D* and *Doom*. Eventually, however, I decided that it was no longer acceptable for someone who calls herself a gamer – not to mention someone writes about games for a living – to be at the mercy of an affliction that has caused me to miss out on so many significant industry-defining titles like *Halo*, *Half-Life* and *Quake*.

## The search for a cure

There are actually a wide range of motion sickness remedies on the market, both pharmaceutical and homeopathic – not all of which are practical for gamers, however.

The problem with over-the-counter anti-nausea medicines like *Gravol*, *Bornine*, *Dramamine* and *Transderm V* is that they take up to an hour to kick in, and they generally also cause drowsiness. Imagine being given the means to finally enjoy *Quake* only to end up doing a face-plant into the keyboard after half an hour.

Natural remedies include ginger root and peppermint oil. Ginger can be taken in pill or candied form, and peppermint oil can be dropped directly onto the tongue or mixed into a tea. (Who needs *Red Bull*?) Again, these take a while to start working.

About a year ago I stumbled on a set of wristbands in my local pharmacy that claimed to be able to reduce the symptoms of motion sickness by using the principles of acupressure (*Sea-Bands*; [www.sea-band.com](http://www.sea-band.com)). There's a plastic nub on the inside of each band, that when placed on each wrist apparently applies pressure to the "Nei Kuan" pulse point located between the tendons on the inside of the wrist. The bands were advertised to start working in a matter of minutes.

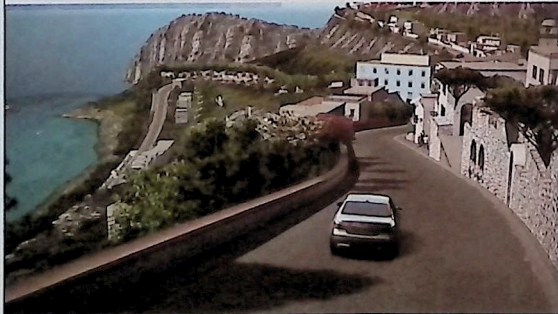
Given that the wristbands were right next to the copper arthritis bracelets, I couldn't help but be skeptical. But I decided to give it a shot nevertheless. At home, I slipped a band onto each wrist and threw in *Ubisoft's Xbox World War II* first-person shooter, *Brothers in Arms*. The familiar nauseous feeling never hit me, and I actually ended up completing the game using the wristbands – which was a first for me and first-person shooters. In my case, the dubious "miracle cure" apparently worked like a charm.

Then again...

I mentioned my wristband revelation to Kornelia when we met at last year's Electronic Entertainment Expo, and she said she didn't believe that such remedies actually worked.

A few weeks later I was playing *Brothers in Arms* once more and I suddenly realized I'd forgotten to put my wristbands on. I'd been playing for a good half hour – without my crutch – and felt none the worse for wear.

By Erin Bell





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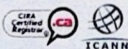
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